

Discussion Points

Communication Strategies and Recommendations during the Policy Development Process

February 24, 2005

1. What do you think will be the best way to market the electronic bulletin board to County Directors, managers and child welfare caseworkers and to alert them when new policies are posted on the bulletin board for review and comment?

Recommendations:

One-time Communication to Announce the Launch of the Bulletin Board

Once the electronic bulletin board is live on the DHFS website, DCFS can send an email to all County Directors, Child Welfare Managers, Supervisors and workers announcing it and providing them with the link to the site. In addition, DCFS can include information in the e-newsletters DCFS in Review (to county directors and area administrators), DCFS Happenings (to DCFS staff) and BMCW News You Can Use (BMCW staff and partner agencies). DCFS can use the eWiSACWIS alert system to notify all eWiSACWIS users, and put regular reminders in the e-newsletters encouraging people to go to the website.

Ongoing, Regular Communications on the Bulletin Board

When individuals visit the electronic bulletin board they can sign up to receive regular communications on specific committees. DCFS can use this function as a means to remind those individuals about policy initiatives and related deadlines. DCFS can also use the e-newsletters to put regular reminders about the bulletin board encouraging them to go to the website. Each policy initiative posting will clearly identify the issue and where appropriate highlight specific questions that the committee would like input on related to the draft policy. The website should include a list of all members on the committee and will encourage those visiting the website to contact committee representatives from their region if they have questions on a specific posting.

2. When individuals comment on draft policy that is posted on the bulletin board, should we ask them to clarify if they are commenting as a member of the PEP Steering Committee, one of the PEP Policy Committee members and/or, as a member of WCHSA? Would it be helpful to also ask for their job title (Director, caseworker, etc) and where they are employed?

Recommendations:

When individuals go to the electronic bulletin board they should sign in with their name, email address, job title and county/tribe/agency in order to determine how individuals are responding to policy items based on their job.

3. Given the tight timeframes we are working under, how much time do you think is reasonable to allow for people to comment on draft policy that is posted on the bulletin board?

Recommendations:

The general protocol should be to give individuals a minimum of two weeks to comment on a specific policy from the time it is posted on the electronic bulletin board. In cases where DCFS needs a quicker response it will clearly state that on the bulletin board. DCFS can also send out reminders to individuals who have signed up to receive information that the deadline for commenting is approaching.

4. There are several options for communicating actual policy changes to counties (numbered memo, electronic bulletin board, statewide CPS Supervisor's meetings, weekly periodic "hot topic" alerts, DCFS in Review). All of these communication strategies could be used, but for different purposes. How would you suggest that each of the communication strategies be used to assure that county staff get information efficiently and have an opportunity to get clarification when needed? Are there additional communication strategies that you would suggest?

Recommendations:

- *Numbered memo: continue to use as DCFS has to provide requirements for implementation of changes in policy;*
- *Electronic bulletin board: use to post draft policies for review and comment so that any individual can provide input into policy development;*
- *Statewide CPS Supervisors meeting: use to discuss new policies that have come out through numbered memo and provide opportunity for questions. Could also use to discuss policies that are being developed by PEP committees to get input early in the process, before a draft policy is posted on the website. Also do a regular PEP update so supervisors are tied into what the Implementation Team and Committees are doing;*
- *Weekly periodic "hot topic" alerts: use to announce new draft policy postings on the electronic bulletin board and to remind individuals to comment when a deadline is approaching. DCFS could also use to announce that a new policy will be issued through numbered memo and if appropriate, that changes will be made to WiSACWIS.*
- *DCFS in Review: feature PEP Implementation Team announcements in every issue and highlight the policy discussions that are posted on the electronic bulletin board.*

5. Each PEP Committee, with broad representation from counties, will participate in the development of policies relevant to their committee. Draft policy will then be presented to the PEP Implementation Team and posted on the electronic bulletin board for everyone to comment on. This process will provide many opportunities for County Directors, managers and child welfare caseworkers to have input into policy development as its occurring. The WCHSA 30-day review that is currently used duplicates the opportunity for input and delays our ability to get policies to counties in a timely manner. As long as a policy has been developed by one of the PEP Committees and has been posted on the bulletin board for input, do you have any concerns with waiving the WCHSA 30-day review period for numbered memos? If so, how might we address those concerns?

Recommendations:

WCHSA members on the Executive Steering Committee agree that the WCHSA 30-day review would be duplicative and therefore could be waived for policies that have been developed by the PEP Committees and posted on the electronic bulletin board for comment. WCHSA members will discuss at an upcoming board meeting if they would like to regularly involve members of the Rapid Response Team in review of draft policy and comments posted on the bulletin board, as a way to prepare a WCHSA specific response to draft policy.